

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 MC-02 IGA-02 AID-20 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9500

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, UK, CI

SUBJECT: BRITISH MILITARY SALES TO CHILE

REF: LONDON 3743

1. 9 APRIL GUARDIAN (UNDERLINED) CARRIES ITEM REPORTING LABOR GOVERNMENT DECISION PROCEED WITH DELIVERY OF "ALL FOUR WARSHIPS TO CHILE UNDER THE POUNDS 65 MILLION ORDER INHERITED BY THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION FROM THE CONSERVATIVES." ACCORDING TO ARTICLE--WHICH HAS NOT APPEARED ELSEWHERE IN THE BRITISH PRESS--THE DECISION WAS REVEALED TO LABOR BACKBENCHERS BY FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN AT A MEETING OF THE PARTY'S PARLIAMENTARY OVERSEAS AFFAIR GROUP ON 8 APRIL.

2. THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE COST TO BRITAIN OF MAKING A POLITICAL GESTURE BY CANCELLING THE SALE
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WOULD BE EXTREMELY HIGH--SOME POUNDS 46 MILLION, AND THE

NEW GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THIS SUM EXCESSIVE TO UNDERLINE THE MESSAGE CONVEYED EARLIER BY ITS CANCELLATION OF OUTSTANDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ITS STATED UNWILLINGNESS TO MAKE ANY NEW MILITARY SALES TO CHILE.

3. COMMENT. EMBOFF HAS VERIFIED GUARDIAN (UNDERLINED) REPORT WITH LABOR CONTACT. WE UNDERSTAND DECISION WAS TAKEN SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AND THAT 8 APRIL MEETING WAS HELD TO SOOTHE FEELINGS OF BACKNCHERS (WHO REPORTEDLY UNDERSTOOD LOGIC OF DECISION AND ACCEPTED IT AS NO NEW SALES WERE INVOLVED). WE UNDERSTAND PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WILL BE PUT LATER TODAY TO CLARIFY SITUATION PUBLICLY.

BRAND

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